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EDITORIAL NOTES

Russia, We Told You So!

The editor of this magazine, writing for the December number of 1913, on the subject of "Democracy and the Jew in Russia," said: "The modern spirit of liberalism and democracy is very much alive in Russia. . . . There are reasons for believing that the next ten years will witness one of the most remarkable and hopeful developments in Russia of all history. . . . Personal or national behavior should buttress itself on the basic principle that every man count as one, be he Jew, Mohammedan, Gentile, or Pagan. Russia will yet sense that where this principle is dead, there will be war and night; where this principle lives, there will be justice and peace."

On the 15th of March, 1917, the world was astonished to learn that the revolution in Russia had completely succeeded, and that the Tsar had abdicated the throne. On the 22d day of the same month the United States formally recognized the new Russian Government.

Russia has returned to her ancient love. The autocracy of the Romanoffs, increasingly blighting for nearly three hundred years, is no more. No longer can it be said that Russia is a tyranny limited only by assassination. As pointed out by Mr. Lloyd George, "when this war began two-thirds of Europe was under autocratic rule. Now it is the other way about, and democracy means peace. The democracy of France hesitated, the democracy of Italy hesitated long before it entered, the democracy of this country sprung back with a shudder, and would never have entered that caldron had it not been for the invasion of Belgium; and if Prussia had been a democracy there would have been no war."

Two hopeful facts have developed since the first of March, destined, we trust, to bring an earlier peace—the entrance of the United States upon the war, and the successful revolution in Russia.

All will not be smooth sailing for democracy in that great country. While national assemblies were familiar there prior to the eighteenth century, and indeed the first Romanoff was elected to his office by a popular assembly, autocracy there has been so unfriendly to popular education that 70 per cent of the inhabitants are to-day illiterate. While the peasants were emancipated by Emperor Alexander II the very year we began our Civil War, the lack of education among these peasants has resulted in a most unfortunate indifference to the government in all matters except possibly the agrarian question. While the Imperial Duma was first set up in 1906, an insufficient amount of time has elapsed for the growth of that intelligence, especially among the Muzhiks, so indispensable to a successful democracy. Then there are the nobility left, the million employees of the old bu-

reaucracy, the extreme radicals, and the non-Muscovitic portion which is large. The road facing the Russian Government is, therefore, strewn with difficulties. But the goal is clear and it will be pursued.

Enough has been accomplished to guarantee no return to the conditions that existed before. The success of this great democratic movement will hearten immeasurably the liberals of Germany. On the ruins of the old Romanoff régime we may expect the rise of a more stable and powerful government, for the people at last are in the way to attain unto the fruits of justice because in the way to be educated in the principles of justice. And if the absolutism and terrorism of Russia can be overcome, it can be overcome elsewhere. It is with an infinite relief that we of the United States, in joining our fortunes with the Entente, are not to march shoulder to shoulder with a Russian tyrant, but with a great republic, struggling hopefully toward the realization of the same principles for which we, too, labor and wait.

As Missionaries to the Germans.

President Wilson's conception of this country as a bringer of democracy to the German people places upon us a peculiar responsibility. We find ourselves figuring as something between the surgeon who risks the life of his patient in an operation to remove a malignant growth and the missionary who goes to a foreign land to convert a people from the barbarous religion, in which they are content, to his own faith which itself is not always equal in practice to the preaching. We are, as it were, placed in the position of those who must fight the German Government *through* the German people for the sake of something that that people is not yet sure that it wants. We must help in the bayonetting of a normally decent German soldier in order to free him from a tyranny which he at present accepts as his chosen form of government. We must lend our help in widowing a good-hearted and kindly German woman in order to save her and her children from the evils of a government which she identifies with the fatherland and which she otherwise little understands. We must aid in the starvation and emaciation of a German baby in order that he, or at least his more sturdy little playmate, may grow up to inherit a different sort of government from that for which his father died.

These are the things which we must do and are today doing by virtue of our declaration of a state of war with Germany. Judged according to the laws of humanity, it can hardly be said that these means to our high end are the kindest in the world. The best we can say of them is that, in the light of circumstances, "we can do

no other." It is fervently to be hoped that during this war we shall keep before us constantly a concrete realization of what we are about, and, however firmly we may believe in the sanctity of our mission, realize that its fruition comes only at the cost of untold suffering to those whom our President has characterized as our friends. We have to remember that they will only with difficulty and only after the lapse of time recognize this "sincere friendship" of ours, which pierces their bodies and breaks their hearts for their own good. We must remember their suffering and meet their instinctive retaliations with understanding and mercy, if we are to make this world a better place by virtue of the war that we now wage.

**The Price
of Friendly
Relations.**

William Hard to present in its columns a running criticism and analysis of the great measures of industrial and military preparedness which this nation must now undertake. The magazine is to be congratulated upon securing such able assistance, and we do not wish to seem to detract from the excellence of Mr. Hard's first article in the issue of *The New Republic* for March 31 in pointing out a rather dangerous conclusion at which he arrives as the result of investigation into our preparedness campaign up to date. But we feel that the carelessness or perhaps the misguided zeal that has led Mr. Hard to present this conclusion is the same sort of thing that those of us will have to contend with all along who sincerely desire that America, declaring what it conceives to be a just war, shall wage that war justly and fairly.

Mr. Hard deplores the fact that, while all this time we have had before us a concrete possible enemy that might have to be met within a very short space of time, our actual performances in the line of preparedness have been conducted on a long-time scale, as if for an unknown enemy, to be engaged at some unknown and evidently distant time in the future. In our opinion this is by no means a fact to be deplored. Until diplomatic relations with Germany were broken off we protested continually that our relations with that country were friendly. In view of these protestations, to prepare obviously to wage war upon Germany would have been to adopt the strategy of Berlin—a strategy that, when we viewed it directed toward ourselves, we have been wont to regard as highly offensive, if not contrary to the standards of international honor. To take the contrary course, as we have done, and which Mr. Hard seems to disapprove, now proves embarrassing and expensive. But this expense we should meet without regret. It is the price of honorable statesmanship. It is one of the

principal things that has enabled our President to state clearly and truthfully that we have done all that our statesmen could do to resist in friendly fashion "the selfish design of a government that did what it pleased and told its people nothing."

**America
First!**

That of which we are about to speak does not pertain to international law; it bears no reference to the Hague Tribunals; it is not even strictly a matter affecting the peace movement. Perhaps it is none of our business. Yet we are inclined to think it is, for it is an interpretation and application of several of those popular slogans that so often afflict the ear and so seldom awake concrete pictures in the thought, such as "red-blooded Americanism," "unhyphenated patriotism," and "America first!" The scene is laid in Urbana, Ohio, a little town that for some years has needed badly a \$50,000 appropriation for a new post-office building. This town is represented in Congress by the Hon. Simeon D. Fess. Congressman Fess recently voted against the "grab-bag-public-building-pork bill" of the last session, in spite of the fact that that bill contained a deserved and much-needed item of \$50,000 for a new Urbana post-office. Many Congressmen regard such an action as political suicide, evidently considering it an axiom that "a Congressman can be no better than his district." But Congressman Fess sincerely believed the appropriations bill to be dishonest and un-American, and was willing to risk his office in that belief. What happened? One thing, at least, which breathes into the somewhat fetid political air a fragrant breath of pure, exalting Americanism. It is the following editorial in the Urbana *Daily Citizen*:

A REAL CONGRESSMAN.

We have always had a warm admiration for Simeon D. Fess, who is representing this district in the halls of Congress, but our feelings have grown into something stronger, since we realize that he does not allow personal desire to lead him away from his duty.

Urbana has wanted a Federal building ever since we can remember. It has deserved one, too, but we don't believe that the residents of Urbana are so sordid in their desires that they would uphold a congressman in stooping to do a morally wrong act just to land the long-hoped-for building.

Had Congressman Fess voted in favor of the Democratic pork-barrel grab, the Democrats would in turn have voted to appropriate funds to erect the building here. Urbana would have been the gainer at the expense of Mr. Fess's honor and the congressman would have lost our respect although he would not have mentioned the matter.

One of the greatest curses of politics is the pork barrel. Pork is a polite word for misappropriation of public funds and common people very often get long stays in the penitentiary for the crime.

Consequently we say that Mr. Fess is a real congressman, and while we are disappointed in losing the Federal building, yet we assert that our congressman did exactly the right thing.

"America First!" like many another movement, begins

appropriately at home. We would adjure those who utter the cry unthinkingly, or with vague aspirations of an American-ruled world, to bring this incident concretely to mind. As we put America first at home, honestly and unselfishly, so shall we, perhaps, put her first in the council of national honesty, unselfish humanitarianism, and world amity abroad.

**A Senator's
Slip in Logic.**

The Hon. James Hamilton Lewis addressed the Senate most eloquently on the morning of April 9 in a speech of which the general tenor was high-minded patriotism and the support of democracy. But we wonder if a perverse and mocking spirit of irony did not fasten upon the good Senator while his consciousness was busy on loftier flights of eloquence. Our wonder is stirred by this sentence at the beginning of his peroration:

Sir, if it be true, as true it be, that the Christ died that men may live; so, sir, men must die that nations may live.

The good Senator's implication is obvious, but there is a sinister ambiguity in this sentence, a hideous contrast as well as a flattering comparison. Christ dying

for humanity is a conception particularly beautiful at the time that the good Senator spoke. Humanity dying for nations is rather an ugly picture at this time or at any other time. Logic is the test of a faulty premise. It brings us in this instance to the conclusion that Christ died that nations may live. If the conclusion is untrue, which premise is to blame?

The World Peace Foundation, with refreshing optimism, is proposing a confederation of the Central American countries into a United States of Central America by September 15, 1921, the centenary of their independence. Barring the fact that this plan has been tried numerous times and has failed ignominiously, there is still one concrete obstacle in the way of the Foundation's desire—that is, that in Central America today dissension lingers on the brink of war by reason of the United States' delay in giving consideration to the two decisions of the Central American Court of Justice against Nicaragua in regard to our present treaty with that nation. If the World Peace Foundation could help first in removing that obstacle, there would be more of a possibility of fulfilling its hope for these five wrangling nations.

THE PRESIDENT'S WAR MESSAGE

APRIL 2, 1917

I HAVE called the Congress into extraordinary session because there are serious, very serious, choices of policy to be made, and made immediately, which it was neither right nor constitutionally permissible that I should assume the responsibility of making.

On the third of February last I officially laid before you the extraordinary announcement of the Imperial German Government that on and after the first day of February it was its purpose to put aside all restraints of law or of humanity and use its submarines to sink every vessel that sought to approach either the ports of Great Britain and Ireland or the western coasts of Europe or any of the ports controlled by the enemies of Germany within the Mediterranean. That had seemed to be the object of the German submarine warfare, earlier in the war; but since April of last year the Imperial Government had somewhat restrained the commanders of its undersea craft in conformity with its promise then given to us that passenger boats should not be sunk, and that due warning would be given to all other vessels which its submarines might seek to destroy, when no resistance was offered or escape attempted, and care taken that their crews were given at least a fair chance to save their lives in their open boats.

The precautions taken were meager and haphazard enough, as was proved in distressing instance after instance in the progress of the cruel and unmanly business; but a certain degree of restraint was observed.

RECENT GERMAN OFFENSES REVIEWED

The new policy has swept every restriction aside. Vessels of every kind, whatever their flag, their character, their cargo, their destination, their errand, have been ruthlessly sent to the bottom without warning and without thought of help or mercy for those on board, the vessels of friendly neutrals along with those of belligerents.

Even hospital ships and ships carrying relief to the so recently bereaved and stricken people of Belgium, though the latter were provided with safe conduct through the proscribed areas by the German Government itself and were distinguished by unmistakable marks of identity, have been sunk with the same reckless lack of compassion or of principle.

I was for a little while unable to believe that such things would in fact be done by any government that had hitherto subscribed to the humane practices of civilized nations. International law had its origin in the attempt to set up some law which would be respected and observed upon the seas, where no nation had right of dominion and where lay the free highways of the world.

By painful stage after stage has that law been built up with meager enough results indeed after all was accomplished that could be accomplished, but always with a clear view, at least, of what the heart and conscience of mankind demanded. This minimum of right the